

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR COVER LETTERS

You may chose a BLOCK (left-justified), or MODIFIED BLOCK (return address and signature centered, and paragraphs indented) style for your cover letter. Block is considered more formal and is the style most generally used for formal business writing. This sample outline below is written in the appropriate manner for a block style cover letter.

Your address

City, State, ZIP

Date

(2 spaces)

Name of individual you are writing to

Title

Organization

Address

City, State, ZIP

(2 spaces)

Dear Ms./Mr./Dr. _____ (be sure to address the letter to the appropriate individual, find out the gender of the person and the proper spelling of their name)

(2 spaces)

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

This paragraph answers the questions of who you are and why you are writing. Name the position or type of work for which you are applying and mention how you heard of the specific opening or organization. You may also make this paragraph more lengthy indicating some of your positive attributes and how these would benefit the organization in general, however, this can be addressed or expanded upon in the second paragraph.

MIDDLE PARAGRAPH

This paragraph allows you the opportunity to display your best qualities and indicate how they will serve the organization. Explain what you know about the organization and why you are interested in working for them. Point to those work/educational/volunteer or service activities that provide you with the appropriate background for the position. Highlight an item from your resume or include something that you were unable to add to your resume, but be sure to not simply reiterate your resume. Note: this segment of the letter may extend over one paragraph, but remember brevity is critical in the cover letter, you need not be exhaustive.

FINAL PARAGRAPH

This paragraph concludes the cover letter, it indicates both your thanks and the next steps to be taken. Reiterate your enthusiasm for the position and your eagerness for a personal meeting. You may wish to indicate that you will follow up with them. If you chose to follow up you generally should wait a week to ten days. Be certain to thank the reader for their time and consideration.

(2 spaces)

Sincerely yours,

(4 spaces and written signature)

Your name typed

